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Missouri '49Er: the Journal of William W. Hunter on the Southern Gold Trail

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matter how long they lived in an area and those who were transitory inhabitants, whether for a season or for several years. Thus, Stroble considers as residents legislators such as Abraham Lincoln, even though his attendance at an Illinois legislative session never lasted for more than about three months in one year. This problem is obvious in chapter two, where Stroble briefly describes the arrival in 1821 of nearly one hundred German settlers from the kingdom of Hanover, but fails to place them into a community context. This is unsettling because Stroble's 1987 article in the *Illinois Historical Journal* clearly shows how their tenuous connection to the town lasted barely a year. This structural flaw also appears in the way Stroble treats James Hall, one of the earliest midwestern writers. Although Hall lived in Vandalia for six years, Stroble fails to develop any community connections. He does describe Hall's activities in a number of local cultural clubs, but merely assumes that activity somehow enhanced the meaning of living in the town. There is no evidence that the unique identity of the town shows up in any of Hall's writings: he could have been living in Dubuque, Iowa; or Fond du Lac, Wisconsin; or Richmond, Indiana.

The missing ingredient is a comparative approach. In an early footnote, Stroble refers to Colonel Thomas Cox (1787-1844), a land surveyor and member of both the Illinois state legislature and the Iowa territorial legislature. Cox's experience in the early 1820s led him to choose unoccupied land as the logical place for a new Illinois capital. In 1838 he used the same logic in choosing the unoccupied land of Johnson County instead of Mt. Pleasant for Iowa's capital. Here is surely a lost opportunity for comparison.

Anyone hoping to find insights into the early career of Abraham Lincoln, the failure of a German settlement in the Midwest, the community influences on James Hall, or community development in the antebellum Midwest will be sorely disappointed.

Missouri '49er: The Journal of William W. Hunter on the Southern Gold Trail, edited by David P. Robrock. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992. xxix, 299 pp. Illustrations, maps, appendixes, notes, bibliography, index. \$32.50 cloth.

REVIEWED BY M. GUY BISHOP, BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

William W. Hunter's gold rush account contained in his carefully recorded journals offers a telling account of the Callaway County (Missouri) Pioneers' trek across the southern route to the gold fields.

Hunter's journal, skillfully edited by David P. Robrock, adds to our argonaut literature by recounting travels along a lesser used path to the gold fields.

This volume compares favorably with other recent gold rush journals, such as Charles Ross Parke's *Dreams to Dust: A Diary of the California Gold Rush* (1989). Hunter lucidly records such monotony-breaking events as the group's playful "hunting" of coyotes and gophers and discovering of the remains of a fellow argonaut who had been murdered by Mexican "bandittos." Regrettably, one can only speculate about what ever became of Hunter in California since the journal ends abruptly when its author enters southern California in December 1849. As the editor notes in the introduction, Hunter "fails to appear in California records" (xxi). Although we know little on the personal level about William W. Hunter, either before or after the gold rush, his journal makes a strong contribution to published argonaut writings nevertheless.

Left for Dixie: The Civil War Diary of John Rath, edited by Kenneth Lyftogt. Parkersburg, Iowa: Mid-Prairie Books, 1993. 100 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography. \$6.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY GAROLD COLE, ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

John Rath, a German immigrant who settled in Cedar Falls, Iowa, served in Company B of the 31st Iowa Infantry from August 1862 until his unit was discharged on July 1, 1865. His unit was involved in some of the most fiercely fought and strategically important battles of the Civil War: the Vicksburg Campaign, Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge, the Atlanta Campaign, and Sherman's March to the Sea.

Despite his "worms-eye" view of the events, Rath always indicates an awareness of exactly where he was, the other units with which he was serving, and the significance of the military engagements. However, he says little about his feelings about his circumstances. For example, he mentions (but does not, as soldiers usually did, grumble about) the heat, cold, and rain. And he only discreetly criticizes the "bad generalship" of General Hooker at Missionary Ridge (35). Even the death and burial of his brother George at Missionary Ridge is described without explanation or emotion (35). However, on other occasions he writes engaging prose. The most interesting portion of the diary describes the March through the Carolinas, a section the editor tells us Rath later rewrote.

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